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INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Q. What importance is attached by the Yugoslav authorities to obtaining, in order to place on trial, persons termed war criminals and traitors who may be in US jurisdiction? Are these persons considered quislings because of collaboration with the enemy or are they largely opponents of the present regime whom the authorities wish to liquidate because of their influence?

A. The regime, through speeches in the Skupstina, official statements, and newspapers, has publicized its displeasure over US retention of war criminals and traitors and will consider their surrender a great diplomatic victory for the regime. The term "traitor," as employed by the regime, applies to any person who is an opponent of the present government. The regime is more interested in such "traitors" than in the actual quislings, being afraid of them as the possible rallying points for a future opposition movement abroad. The case of Gen Medic shows that the regime is not really interested in persons who might be real quislings. Placing "traitors" on trial intimidates the population and emphasizes the threat to anyone who opposes the regime.

2. Q. How does Yugoslavia regard US refusal to surrender persons against whom, in US opinion, prima facie cases of guilt are not made out?

A. Even though persons conversant with international law have shown the regime that it has no legal title to claim war criminals and that in most cases it has not produced the necessary prima facie evidence, the regime will publicize US refusal as one of the "reactionary" aspects of the US foreign policy.

3. Q. Do you know of any further trials similar to the Jovanovich trials which may be contemplated by the authorities, i.e., Macek, Subasic, Grol, Pilakovic?

A. Grol and Subasic have apparently abandoned the political field and the fight against the regime. There is no evidence that the Government is preparing any trial against them.

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The trials in Zagreb against some Ustashi indicated that the regime was gathering material and witnesses against Mucak, but I do not know if they will dare to try him. Such a trial naturally would be an absolute frame-up. While speaking of trials, I cite the following incident which illustrates popular hatred of the regime: During the trial of some German officers who had been surrendered as war criminals, I happened to be in a barber shop where the trial was being discussed. Even though some of the defendants admitted loathsome crimes, the group discussing their trial recounted with the greatest relish those portions of the testimony in which the defendants attacked the regime.

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